



DIMENSIONING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN BRAZIL

**A Study on the Perceptions and
Experiences of Violence Among
Women**

Objectives

- What is the extent of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in Brazil today?
- Who is the typical victim of Gender-based Violence?
- What situations and scenarios characterize abuse?
- Where in Brazil does Gender-based Violence victimize more women?
- How victimization affects female lives?

Despite increasing state rhetoric, academic work, media coverage and civil society involvement, issues of Gender-based Violence are far from being exhausted in Brazil.

This study aims to deepen this debate by dimensioning the scale and identifying the nature of this phenomena as perceived by Brazilians. It is only with empirical knowledge about the perceptions and experiences of Gender-based Violence, as well as its consequences, that more actionable strategies can be deployed and assessed to support and protect groups at risk.

Methodology

The study "Dimensioning Gender-Based Violence: A Study on the Perceptions and Experiences of Violence Among Women" collected the opinions of 1,019 people in 128 large and medium-sized cities in all Brazilian states.

The interviews were conducted using an online questionnaire and the sample was weighted according to geographical region, population of the cities, gender, age and social class to represent the adult population living in urban areas of Brazil.

Target Audience

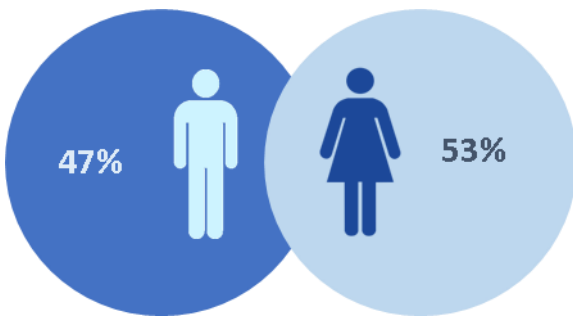


1019
interviews

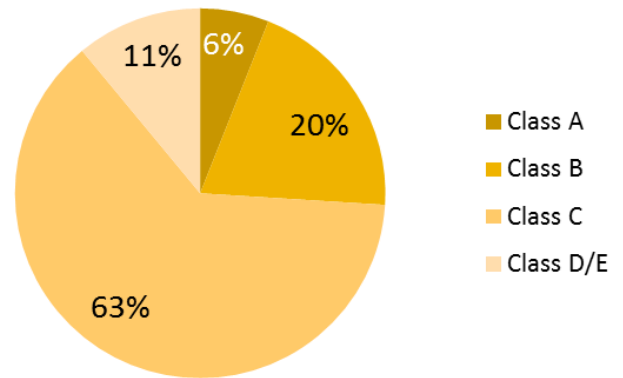
Universe:

Brazilians aged 17 and over, living in cities with 200,000 inhabitants or more, with internet access.

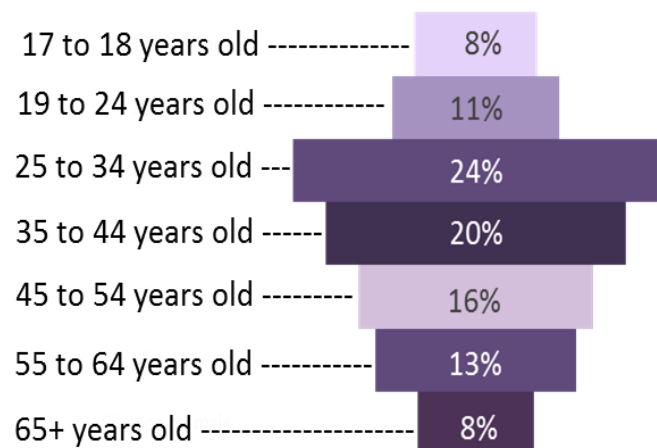
Gender



Social Class



Age





Data on Gender- Based Violence

Violence Data

Recent allegations of sexual harassment in the entertainment industry and corporate environments and the growing awareness and activism in society regarding inequalities rekindle the discussion about gender-based violence in public and private spaces.

The radical and massive insertion of women in the labor and education markets of the last decades and the exponentiation of roles played by females had the unexpected effect of leaving women more exposed to situations of violence and harassment.

Moreover, it is notable that women are increasingly more aware and sensitive to interpret as "violence" unwanted and forced advancements into their personal and emotional space; situations which were once seen only as "tough moments", almost a sentence of "being a woman", a fate of the feminine condition. The world is going through a historical process of denaturalizing violence against women.

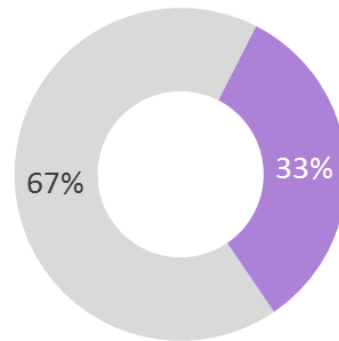
Social tolerance for violence against women and victimization of the victim started to be reported, fueling women's confidence to expose the assailant, who in many cases is inside their own homes

Paradoxically, this movement coexists with the naturalization and social consent of gender-based violence, discouraging the victim from recognizing herself as such.

Violence Data

One in every three Brazilian women (33%) report having experienced some form of gender-based violence or sexual harassment in the past year.

Experienced gender-based violence or sexual harassment in the past year



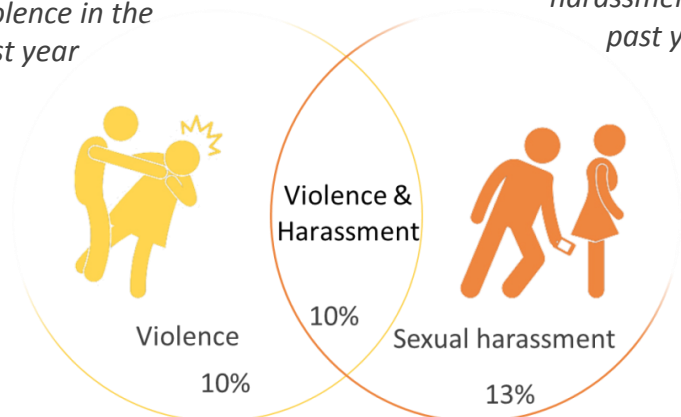
n= 540

■ Yes ■ No

Out of the 33% who report having experienced some kind of abuse in the past year, 10% claim to have experienced physical or psychological **violence**, while 13% claim to have been the victim of some form of **sexual harassment**. Another 10% of Brazilian women state having gone through both experiences.

Experienced gender-based violence in the past year

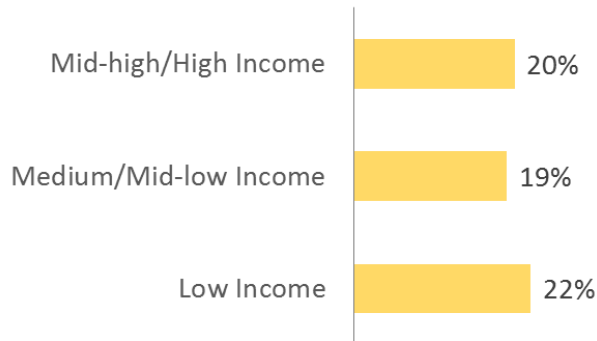
Experienced sexual harassment in the past year



The Victims: Socio-economic Class

When focusing only on the victims of aggression, the incidence of gender-based violence reports is similar across all social classes, 1 out of 5 women, **regardless of their social and economic circle**, claim to have suffered violence.

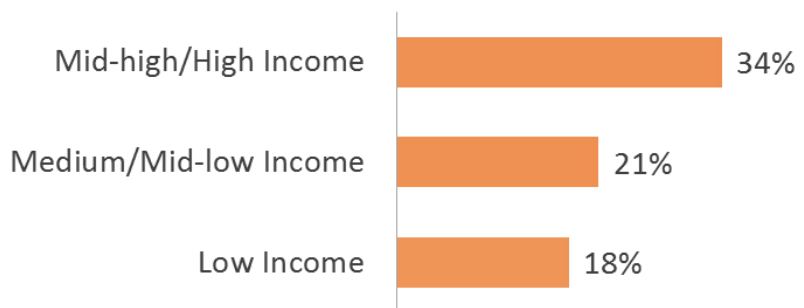
Gender-based Violence by income



In the case of victims of sexual harassment, there is an important difference between income groups: those with **higher income** claim **more often** to have been victimized (34%).

In contrast, lower income women tend to perceive abuse less frequently, with an index below the national average (18%). As the poorest population is more exposed to social violence, it is plausible to presume a naturalization or minimization of abusive acts, not identifying as harassment situations that women in a safer socioeconomic situation perceive as such.

Sexual abuse by income

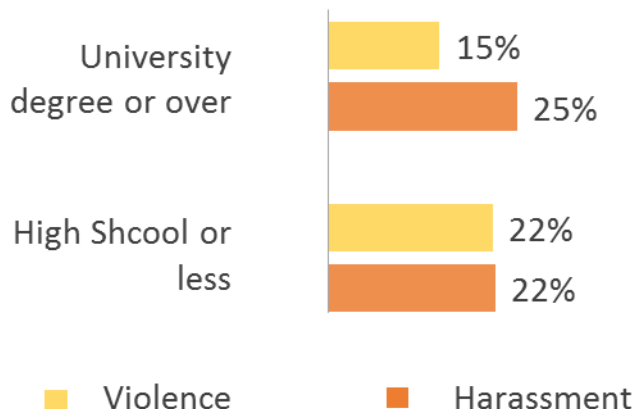


The Victims: Education

The **higher the educational level, the lower the incidence of gender-based violence**, reinforcing the key role of **education as an instrument for female self-protection**.

In the case of **sexual harassment** the scenario persists **regardless the level of education** of the victim: 1 in every 4 women, regardless of educational level, was exposed to unwanted sexual advancements.

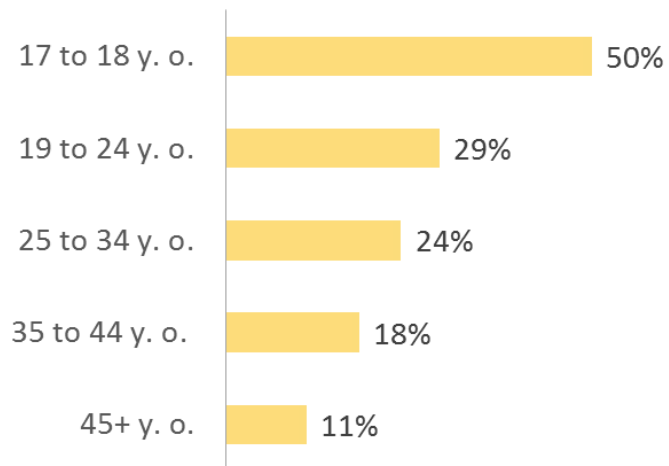
Gender-based violence and sexual harassment by educational level



The Victims: Age

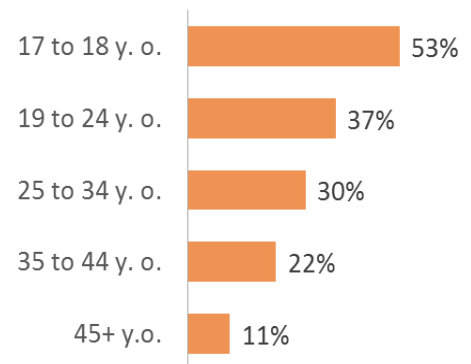
There is a great **disparity** between the different **age groups** with regard to the incidence of gender- violence: **the younger** the woman is, **the more vulnerable** she is to the different forms of violence. Half of the participants aged 18 or less suffered violence experiences in the last year, while 3 out of 10 aged 19-24 reported to go through the same experience (29%).

Gender-based violence by age group



Regarding **sexual harassment**, there is a **similar pattern**, with higher incidence in the younger groups. Due to the fact that younger women move through multiple settings: family, work, study, their likelihood of exposure to abuse is increased. In addition, there is a strong **sexualization of young women** in Brazil, coupled with a difficulty that young women face **to be respected** as citizens.

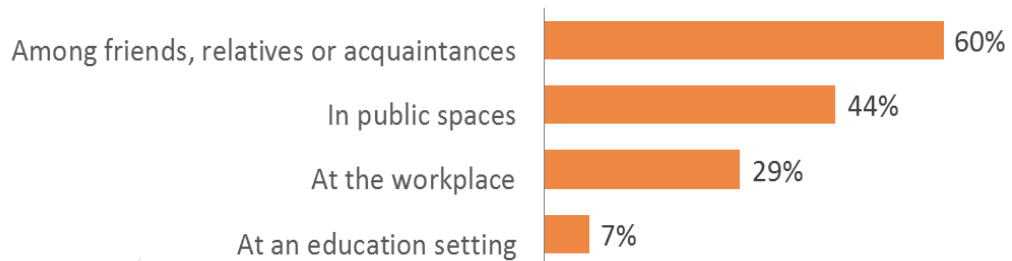
Sexual harassment by age group



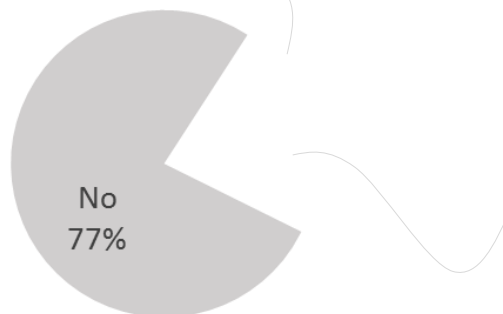
The Threat is at Home

Corroborating previous researches that show the **abuser** is usually someone **within the victim's inner circle**, **6 out of 10** women report having been sexually harassed by **friends, relatives or acquaintances** (60%). Additionally, **44%** were approached while using **public transportation**, attending **parties**, or just walking down the **street**. Another daily life setting that is reported as a significant scenario for abuse is the **workplace** (29%).

Where sexual harassment occurred



n= 125

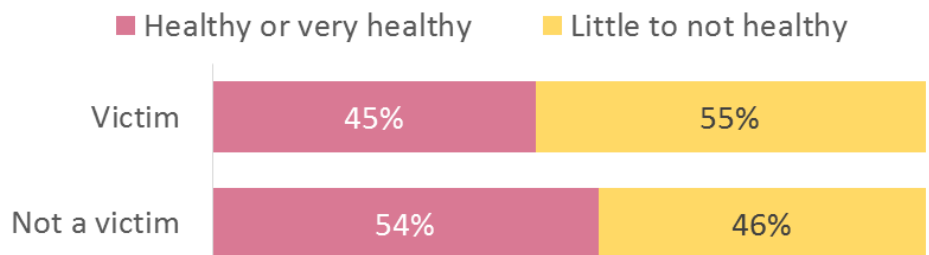


*According to the Court of Justice of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the **protective measures for women** under the Maria da Penha Law increased **59% in 2017**.*

The Consequences of Violence: Self-perception

Physical and psychological abuse have different impacts on women's lives, especially the emotional shock and negative effects in quality of life, with direct consequences to personal, family and social structures. With regards to **self-perceived health**, victims of harassment or gender-based violence tend to **consider themselves less healthy** more frequently than those who did not go through these experiences.

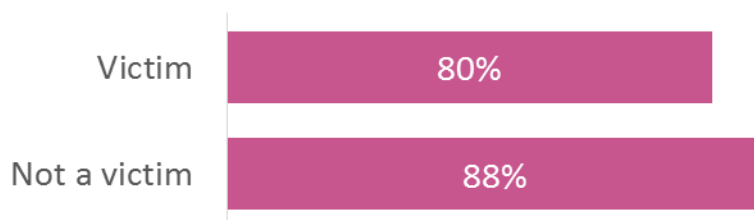
Self-perceived health in women victims of violence / harassment



P21 and P27/P28

Violence also **impacts women's self-esteem** and their perception towards their **ability to care for or protect their children**. Victims of sexual harassment perceive themselves as slightly less capable when it comes to their role as mothers.

Women victims of sexual harassment or not who consider themselves to be good mothers (Sum of percentages of whether agree completely or partially)



P18.5 and P28

*"The experience of violence destroys a woman's belief in her parental ability to protect and keep a child safe".
(Sani, 2008. [Link](#))*

In 1999 the UN established the 25th of November as the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, to encourage reflection on the abuse experienced by women around the world.

Almost 20 years later, **discussions on the victimization of women remain in force and power a strong social movement aimed at giving women power over their own bodies and spaces**, ensuring their control over their own lives, their right to come and go and their place in society. However, the survey "Dimensioning Gender-Based Violence" indicates that **there are still many barriers to be overcome** to ensure that **no woman** believes that **being afraid of their partner or walking alone on the street** is normal. Gender-based violence is still a reality and its numbers are still alarming. It will take more than an annual day to reflect on it.



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